

IRS News Release

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Businesses Using IRS.gov to Get Employer Identification Numbers

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WASHINGTON — Businesses and tax professionals are turning to an online application form on IRS.gov to get new employer identification numbers. The Internal Revenue Service has issued more than 498,081 of the numbers through its online application since it became available in April.

The online application form immediately issues a new employer identification number, or EIN, eliminating both paperwork and the usual four-to-10 day wait to receive an EIN through paper processes. The IRS assigns the nine-digit numbers to identify taxpayers. The number is required for a host of purposes and getting it quickly is important for someone starting a business. A business cannot establish a bank account, for instance, without a federal EIN.

“Making EINs available to IRS customers on an immediate and permanent basis is an important step in improving our partnership with the business community,” Commissioner Mark W. Everson said. “We want to reduce burden for businesses and tax professionals wherever possible.”

By the end of November 2003, the IRS was receiving 37.5 percent of all EIN applications through the Internet. The online application mimics the paper Form SS-4, Application for Employer Identification Number. EIN applications can also be submitted by phone, fax or by mail. Applications faxed or mailed are often incomplete, contain errors and frequently require additional contact with the applicant by an IRS employee. The online application requires that all information needed to process the application be submitted before the EIN is assigned to the taxpayer.

The easiest way to get to the online EIN application is to type “EIN” in the IRS Keyword search on the IRS.gov home page.

The online EIN application form joins several IRS Business Systems Modernization products already working to reduce taxpayer burden and improve IRS employee’s service to taxpayers. These new products and services include:

- **Where’s My Refund?** — Provides taxpayers with their refund status over the Internet. Taxpayers used the service more than 17.6 million times in 2003.

- **Where's My Advance Child Tax Credit?** — Gives taxpayers the status of their Advance Child Tax Credit checks over the Internet. So far, taxpayers have used the service nearly 15 million times.
- **e-services** — A suite of products that provide tax professionals and those who file select information returns, such as banks and other financial institutions, with new choices for working electronically with the IRS.
- **Customer Communications** — Modernized call systems cut by half taxpayers' call-waiting time and the number of abandoned calls. It also introduced bilingual voice recognition capabilities, which helped double the number of Spanish calls.
- **Customer Relationship Management** — Provided nearly 4,000 revenue agents with direct laptop access to tax computation software.
- **HR Connect** — Allows 73,000 IRS users to perform many personnel actions online.

Links on IRS.gov:

- Online EIN Application — <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=102767,00.html>
- SS-4, Application for Employer Identification Number — <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fss4.pdf> (PDF 28K)
- Instructions for Form SS-4 — <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/iss4.pdf> (PDF 71K)